



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 83720
BOISE, IDAHO 83720-0027

DR. MARILYN HOWARD
STATE SUPERINTENDENT
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

IDAHO TITLE II WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT (WIA) ASSESSMENT POLICY 2005-06

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA), enacted by Congress in 1998, requires states to establish a comprehensive accountability system for adult education programs. The WIA mandates that states must gather data on several core measures, including the educational gain of adult learners. Accountability details are defined through the National Reporting System (NRS).

The assessment policies and procedures included in this document are designed to ensure that adult education programs in Idaho meet the following requirements of the NRS:

- Use of statewide standardized assessments with parallel forms of pre/post-tests to determine educational gain of participants;
- Use of consistent testing and security protocols to ensure a standardized testing format and to ensure quality data; and
- Use of data to promote continuous improvement of local programs.

The five required core performance measures for Title II programs described below include outcome, descriptive and participation measures that reflect the core indicator requirements of the WIA. States must report the required measures on all students who receive 12 hours or more of service. The Department of Education will use these measures to judge program performance, including eligibility for incentive grants.

Educational Gain – Learner completes or advances one or more educational functioning levels from the starting level measured upon entry into the program.

Entered Employment – Learner obtains a job by the end of the first quarter after the program exit quarter.

Retained Employment – Learner remains employed in the third quarter after the program exit quarter.

Receipt of Secondary School Diploma or GED – Learner obtains certification of attaining passing scores on the General Educational Development (GED) tests, obtains a diploma or state recognized equivalent, or verifies documented satisfactory completion of required secondary studies.

Placement in Postsecondary Education or Training – Learner enrolls in a postsecondary educational or occupational skills-training program that does not

duplicate other services of training received, regardless of whether the prior services or training were completed.

State Role

The state is responsible for implementing and monitoring the core indicator procedures to ensure that local programs follow uniform data collection policies and procedures. These responsibilities include:

- Ongoing staff development of local staff;
- Technical assistance to local programs;
- Implementing quality control and monitoring procedures to ensure that local data procedures are accurate and complete;
- Establishing a state database that includes an individual student record system employing a relational database for local programs;
- Establishing statewide uniform methods for a student assessment system; and
- Documenting state learning gains on the educational functioning levels.

Local Role

Local programs are responsible for allocating sufficient resources to collect the NRS measures and reporting them according to state and federal guidelines. They are also responsible for analyzing and using their data to evaluate and adjust program improvement activity. These activities include:

- Understanding the definitions of each measure and clear guidelines on how to record these measures, including how to handle missing or incomplete data;
- Understanding of, and compliance with, the federal and state-defined procedures for assessing students for placement into educational functioning levels and assessing progress using valid, standardized procedures to ensure comparability across programs;
- Understanding how to correctly report data to the state; and
- Reviewing the data with staff and building a data-driven program improvement plan based upon the data findings.

Recognized Standardized Instruments for Assessment

All Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Adult Secondary Education (ASE) programs funded by the Idaho State Department of Education/Office of Adult Basic Education will use the *Tests of Adult Basic Education* (TABE) to assess their ABE population (TABE Complete Battery or TABE Survey/post-testing). The *Woodcock-Johnson* is recommended as appropriate for learning disabled and low level literacy. Many English as a Second Language (ESL) programs funded by the Idaho State Department of Education/Office of Adult Basic Education will use the *Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System* (CASAS) instrument. The *BEST Oral/ Literacy and/or BEST Plus* may also be used.

Definitions

An “instructional hour” is defined by the NRS to include “all time the learner spends in a program-sponsored activity designed to promote student learning in the curriculum.” Instructional time includes time in goal-setting/orientation; instructional class time, open-lab with teacher assistance, program sponsored tutoring, and time relating to pre-and post-assessment. Time is reported as total hours.

Educational gain is determined by comparing the student’s initial pre-test functioning level with the educational functioning level determined through post-testing

- a. Level gain will be determined using the NRS Guidelines definitions, test scores and skill descriptors.
- b. Idaho Management and Accountability System (IMAS) will calculate educational gain automatically when CASAS pre-and post-test score information is entered in.

General Guidelines for All Assessment: Pre and Post-Testing

Pre-Testing

- All students must be assessed within two to three weeks of program entry. Following program entry, complete battery or level testing will be completed within a two-week period. No student will begin instruction prior to placement testing using a TABE/CASAS/ BEST/ BEST Plus appraisal. 100% of students will be pre-tested.
- An appropriate TABE/CASAS/BEST/ BEST PLUS appraisal must be administered to students prior to pre-testing in the areas of reading, math, and/or speaking/listening.
- Appraisal Requirements:
 - ABE Locator for ABE
 - CASAS Appraisal 20 for ESL Listening and/or Reading
 - BEST Plus print version appraisal
 - Programs must assess all students in at least one basic skill area
 - ESL programs must list the pre/post-test instrument and forms used

Post-Testing

- The state recommends approximately 70-100 hours of instruction in Casas prior to post-testing, 60-120 hours of instruction in TABE prior to post-testing, and 80-100 hours of instruction prior to post-testing (60 hours of instruction minimum), and/or three to six months of instruction between testing (according to best practice stated by each testing agency and found below in this document). The state performance target requires that 50% of all students must be post-tested.
- Programs may assess students who indicate they are leaving the program before the scheduled post-test time, or at the end of a term, in order to maximize collection of paired test data. Although it is sometimes necessary, it is not recommended that students with fewer than 35 hours of instruction be post-tested.

- Students must not receive the same version/form of a test within the same six-month period.
- Students must receive alternate forms of an assessment instrument for each pre/post-test. The Idaho Management and Accountability System (IMAS) prevent the same form testing.
- Students need not be post-tested in skill area(s) in which they do not receive instruction.
- Programs must use the appropriate TABE/CASAS/BEST assessment post-test form based on the student's pre-test score.
- For low-intensity programs, post-tests are to be administered when the student has persisted in the program for at least three to six months.
- The appropriate post-test is to be administered to students who have indicated they are leaving the program.

Unacceptable Methods of Assessment for EFL Placement

The following assessment instruments and procedures **may NOT** be used for determining program entry or exit:

- Official GED Practice Test
- GED, except for the High Adult Secondary level for exit
- TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)
- Standardized tests that do not have a parallel form (short form of *Basic English Skills Test*; SORT (*Slossan Oral Reading Test*); ESLOA (*English as a Second Language Oral Assessment*, etc.)
- Standardized tests that have not been correlated to the NRS levels by the publishers of the tests
- College Placement Tests
- Using different assessment instruments for pre and post-assessment
- Using same form for both pre and post-assessment
- The TABE Locator or CASAS Appraisal may not be used as substitute for pre and post-testing.
- Avoid using TABE 5 and 6, 7 and 8. Since the state provided TABE tests 9 and 10 to all grantees, the use of TABE 9 and 10 will be required to determine program entry and exit.

Test Security

Test security is an essential component of standardized assessment. Programs must have a system in place for the safeguarding of all restricted materials, including the distribution and collection of assessment materials.

“Test security means not exposing examinees to test questions or content before actual testing. It also means keeping test books, answer keys, and test directions under lock and key between sessions and keeping test results confidential.” (Guide to Administering the TABE/CTB, McGraw-Hill, 2004)

- The program director is responsible for safeguarding all restricted materials.
- Completed answer sheets must be treated as confidential.
- Testing will be provided in rooms that are as distraction-free as possible.
- Programs must obtain and file an approved Release of Information form signed by the student prior to requesting or releasing any information regarding a student.

Students with Special Needs

Accommodations in testing alter the conditions for administering a test or change the nature of an assessment instrument, allowing test takers with disabilities to demonstrate their skills and abilities more accurately. Proper accommodations meet the needs of examinees without changing what a test is intended to measure.

Local Adult Education Agencies

Local agencies are responsible for providing fully accessible services and for ensuring that these services meet reasonable criteria. Adult learners with disabilities are responsible for requesting accommodations and for submitting documentation of their disability at the time of registration, program entry, or after diagnosis. The need to use an accommodation should be documented in official learner records, such as the Individual Program Education Plan (IPP) or Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The documentation must show that the disability interferes with the learner's ability to demonstrate performance on the test. The information can come from a doctor's report, a diagnostic assessment from a certified professional, and other clinical records. Agencies often can - contact the local division of vocational rehabilitation or a secondary school to request documentation of a disability.

Accommodations in Test Administration Procedures

Local test administrators may provide or allow some accommodations in test administration procedures or environment for documented disabilities. Examples include accommodations in test time, giving supervised breaks, or providing a sign language interpreter for test administration directions only. It is not an appropriate accommodation in test administration procedures to read a TABE/CASAS/BEST Plus reading test to a learner with low literacy skills or blindness. Idaho subscribes to the TABE, and Best Plus, CASAS Test Accommodations documents for appropriate accommodations.

Assessment Policies for the Use of TABE (ABE)

Section A: Purpose

This policy describes the conditions under which Idaho ABE-funded programs are to use the *Tests of Adult Basic Education* to measure the pre/post progress of adult learners enrolled in Adult Basic Education programs. All ABE programs are required to use exclusively TABE 9 and 10.

Section B: Test Level/Grade Range

As noted in **Table 1**, the *Tests of Adult Basic Education* (TABE) includes areas that measure reading, language, mathematics, and spelling. There are five overlapping levels for TABE 9 and 10.

Table 1 Areas of TABE Measurement

Test Level	Grade Range
L (Literacy)	0-1.9
E (Easy)	2-3.9
M (Medium)	4.0-5.9
D (Difficult)	6.0-8.9
A (Advanced)	9.0-12.9

Section C: Complete Battery and Survey

Since the provided diagnostic information is used to inform instruction, Idaho requires the use of the TABE Complete Battery, Forms 9 and 10, Levels L, E, M, D or A for pre-assessment in reading and math. Idaho requires the use of the full battery TABE, individual TABE skill level test (if testing in one area and instruction has been provided in that area), or TABE Survey for post-testing. Administration of the language battery is optional and at the discretion of the local program. The results of the TABE Locator are used to determine which TABE Complete Battery (reading and math, optional language) should be administered as the pre-test. The full battery, or the subtest(s) that is administered at pre-test, should be in the primary content area that will be the focus of instruction.

Section D: Complete Battery Test Forms and Levels

As noted in **Table 2**, the pre-test level L, E, M, D, A or the Complete Battery subtest to be administered is determined by the learner's score on the TABE Locator, TABE 9 and 10.

Table 2 TABE Pre-Test Levels

Locator Test Scores Reading	Evaluation Chart Mathematics	TABE Level of Administration
6 and Below	4-6	E
7-8	7-8	M
9-10	9-11	D
11-12	12-16	A

Reading: If an examinee scores fewer than six correct on the reading section of Locator, administration of the TABE Level 1 or the *Woodcock-Johnson Diagnostic Reading Battery* should be administered.

Mathematics: If an examinee scores fewer than four items correct in mathematics, administration of the TABE Level L Mathematics should be administered.

Significant Level Difference on Locator: If an examinee's Locator test scores indicate differences in reading, mathematics, and/or language, it is appropriate to assign the examinee different TABE level test booklets for reading, mathematics, and language. Follow the TABE Locator levels of administration in the chart above.

Top-Out in a Level: When administering a TABE post-test, use the level of the Complete Battery subtest that was administered at pre-test (e.g., Form 9, Level M at pre-test; Form 10, Level M at post-test). If the student tops out in a level, administer the Locator to determine their readiness to move to the next level rather than automatically assigning the next level of the TABE as the post-test. TABE recommends that the Locator be administered again at the time of post-testing for proper placement and best results.

High ASE: The post-test measurement for High ASE level is passing the GED or completion of a secondary equivalent certificate or diploma. The post-test measurement for High ASE level is completion of a secondary equivalent certificate or diploma. Completing the GED signals the completion of high ASE as meeting the level completion of NRS Table 4.

Carryover Scores: The post-test score entered into IMAS at the end of the program year may be used as the pre-test for the new program year if the carryover score is not older than six months. Students must be retested in the new program year if they have no carryover score that fits within the range.

Retesting: In some instances students may be retested more than once to determine progress gains as they work toward meeting goals. CTB/McGraw-Hill recommends that 60 hours of instructional time pass prior to post-testing using the same level (A,D,M,E) and different form (9/10). The TABE user guide recommends that the same form (9/10) and level of the TABE not be administered within a six-month period or 120 contact hours. If retesting is given within a six-month period, it is imperative that alternate forms of the test be used.

Section E: Administration Procedures

As noted in **Table 3**, each program will have a TABE administrator's guide and follow recommended timelines. Extended time should only be allowed for students with approved accommodations.

Table 3 Timelines for TABE Administration

TABE 9 and 10	Complete Battery
Reading Subtest	50 Minutes
Math Computation	24 Minutes
Applied Math	50 Minutes
Language	55 Minutes

Included in the administrator's guides are required testing procedures as listed below.

- Follow post-testing guidelines included in the general testing guidelines above;
- Only staff that has been trained to administer the TABE Locator and Complete Battery/Survey are allowed to administer the TABE 9 and 10 tests;
- Program staff are required to attend assessment training when it is offered and are to review the Idaho policy and TABE administrator's guide annually; and
- All TABE tests must be timed according to the TABE Test and Administration Manual guidelines:
 - The TABE Locator reading takes approximately 12 minutes.
 - The TABE Locator mathematics takes approximately 12 minutes.
 - Each subtest must be administered using the directions stated in the TABE manual.

Section F: Accommodations

See the TABE document regarding accommodations for further explanation. The following list of accommodations, however, is allowed:

- Large print version of the TABE
- Audio version of the TABE
- Braille version of the TABE
- Time limits may be extended for administering the TABE to time-and-a-half for any learner with a documented formal diagnosis of a learning disability.

Section G: TABE Data

Table 4 defines scale scores and grade equivalent scores as they relate to NRS level correlation. When interpreting TABE test data, it is necessary to record scale scores, not grade level equivalencies in the statewide IMAS. The scale score is the score used to compute and derive all other scores. Since grade level equivalencies are derived from scale scores, using scale scores to report educational gain is more accurate in reporting student achievement. It is necessary to use the TABE Norms Book to convert the number-correct score (the number of test items a student answers correctly on a test) to scale scores. The Norms Book will also provide appropriate grade level equivalency scores.

Table 4 Correlation of TABE Scale Scores with NRS Levels

Scale Scores	Grade Equivalent	NRS Level
Reading: 367 and below Math: 313 and below	0-1.9	Beginning ABE Literacy
Reading: 368-460 Math: 314-441	2-3.9	Beginning ABE
Reading: 461-517 Math: 442-505	4-5.9	Low Intermediate ABE
Reading: 518-566	6-8.9	High Intermediate ABE

Math: 506-565		
Reading: 567-595 Math: 566-594	9-10.9	Low ASE
Reading: Greater than 595 Math: Greater than 594	11-12.9	High ASE

Assessment Policy for the Use of CASAS (ESL)

1. *Introduction and Context*

This document provides the Idaho State Department of Education (ISDE)/ Office of Adult Basic Education (ABE) guidelines for developing and implementing a comprehensive state and local assessment policy for ESL programs. This document identifies key assessment policies that support:

1. Selection and use of appropriate assessment instruments
2. Appropriate test administration, scoring, and reporting of test scores
3. Appropriate use of test results to inform instruction and improve programs
4. Reporting valid and reliable assessment results and related information for accountability to local, state, and federal funding sources and policymakers

ISDE/ Office of ABE's assessment policy guidelines include the selection and use of appropriate learner assessment and procedures for:

1. Accurate learner placement into appropriate program and instructional level
2. Diagnostic information to inform instruction
3. Pre- and post- testing to monitor progress toward goals

These policy guidelines also include staff training and test security requirements for all staff who administer CASAS assessment and use the results from these assessments.

A. *Need for Assessment Policy*

Standardized, ongoing assessment of learner progress is essential to ensure that all learners become proficient in literacy and language skills for adult learners. To ensure accuracy and consistency, Idaho's Adult Basic Education program prescribes that adult education agencies use CASAS assessments with proven validity and reliability that correlate to the National Reporting System (NRS). CASAS assessment data are used to place learners at appropriate levels of instruction, to diagnose learner strengths and weaknesses, to monitor progress, and to certify learner mastery at specific levels of instruction or readiness to exit adult education.

Validity and Reliability

All CASAS assessment instruments undergo rigorous test development and validation procedures and meet the standards of the American Education Research Association (AERA), the National Council for Measurement in Education (NCME), and the American Psychological Association (APA). The *CASAS Technical Manual, Third Edition, 2004*) contains detailed information about test validity and reliability

Validity

The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (1999) states that validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of the specific inferences made from test scores. There are various evidences of validity, with construct validity encompassing the overriding issue of proper use and construction of test items, and with content-related and criterion-related validity as subcomponents. Item content evidence is a measure of the extent to which test items measure what they are intended to measure. For a detailed discussion of CASAS content validity evidence, see the *CASAS Technical Manual*.

Criterion-related validity, sometimes referred to as predictive validity, assesses the ability or effectiveness of an instrument in predicting something it should theoretically be able to predict. CASAS created ABE Skill Level Descriptors (reading, math, and writing skills) to show a continuum of skills from beginning ABE through advanced adult secondary levels; CASAS also created ESL Skill Level Descriptors (listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills) for ESL from beginning literacy/pre-beginning ESL through proficient skills. Skill Level Descriptors provide general content information on how an adult learner's numerical scale score on a CASAS test in a specific skill area corresponds to the job-related and life skills tasks a person can generally accomplish.

Results from most CASAS tests are reported on a common numerical scale. This scale has been used successfully with more than three million adult and youth learners. The CASAS scale is divided into five broad levels: A (beginning literacy) to E (advanced secondary), each encompassing a range of scores. Levels A and B have been further subdivided to guide instructional placement and to monitor learner progress. Each level is defined by a CASAS scale score range with corresponding competency descriptors of performance in employment and adult life skills contexts.

The CASAS Skill Level Descriptors have been validated by expert teachers, members of the CASAS National Consortium, as well as through external validation studies. See the *CASAS Technical Manual*, pages 57–70. During the late 1990s staff from the Center for Applied Linguistics and CASAS worked together to review and update the correlation between Student Performance Levels (SPLs) and CASAS levels to ensure that the NRS Skill Level Descriptors used for reporting learner gains were consistent with research already done in the field. Large-scale CASAS implementing states such as California, Connecticut, and Oregon participated in a national-level NRS advisory committee and provided guidance in the initial development and implementation of the NRS.

Once the NRS educational functioning levels were finalized, CASAS conducted a review and confirmed that the CASAS Skill Level Descriptors align with the skill levels of the NRS. The relationship among CASAS levels and score ranges and NRS Performance Levels is presented in Table 1 -. This table also shows how CASAS, the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS), SPLs, and years of schooling completed are related:

Table 1 Relationship Among CASAS, NRS*, NALS, SPL***, and Years of Schooling Completed**

CASAS Levels	CASAS Score	NRS Levels and Names for ABE	NRS Levels and Names for ESL	NALS Levels	SPL Levels	Years of School
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Ranges				Completed			
A	180 and below	1	Beginning ESL Literacy	1	1	1 to 2	
A	181 – 200	1	Beginning ABE Literacy	2	Beginning ESL	1	2 and 3
B	201 – 210	2	Beginning Basic Education	3	Low Intermediate ESL	1	4
B	211 – 220	3	Low Intermediate Basic Education	4	High Intermediate ESL	1	5
C	221 – 235	4	High Intermediate Basic Education	5	Low Advanced ESL	2	6
D	236 – 245	5	Low Adult Secondary Education	6	High Advanced ESL	2/3	7
E	246 and above	6	High Adult Secondary Education			3	8
							13+

Reliability

The *CASAS Technical Manual* provides data on the reliability of the item bank (Chapter 3) and specific test series (Chapters 4 and 5). The test administration manuals for each test series also contain information about reliability.

Reliability (test accuracy) has two major subcomponents — consistency and stability. For each scale score attained on a CASAS test, a standard error of measurement (SEM) is given. In addition to reporting a scale score for raw scores attained on a test, CASAS established a range of accuracy for each test form. For every score in the accurate range, a SEM for each scale score is given. For scale scores exceeding the accurate range, CASAS provides a usable, conservative scale score estimate. However, administrators are encouraged to administer a test at the next more difficult test level to obtain a more accurate scale score estimate. CASAS does not report scale scores for raw scores falling below the accurate range. In addition to the SEMs, the Test Information Function is displayed for each of the test forms in Chapters 4 and 5 of the *CASAS Technical Manual*.

CASAS uses the most currently researched and recommended methodology in educational measurement practice — Item Response Theory (IRT) — to establish indexes of item bank, test, and test score reliability. For indexes of consistency, CASAS tests for the unidimensionality of the item bank ensuring items all measure the same underlying construct. See pages 29 through 50 of the *CASAS Technical Manual* for results of these analyses. Traditional item statistics, including item point biserial correlations and their p-values, are presented for all the test series.

The test for item stability is found under “parameter invariance” (pages 51–52) and “differential item functioning” (pages 52–56). Parameter invariance analyses test

whether the item difficulties have changed over time. The 2002 findings show that the item difficulties have maintained their relative difficulties since their original calibrations in the 1980s. Differential item functioning (DIF) tests whether the item difficulties change in the measurement of different kinds of learners, such as learners of different gender and different ethnicity. The findings show that the item difficulties have remained stable regardless of gender or ethnicity.

Studies Conducted

Three claims of CASAS implementation were evaluated and upheld by the Program Effectiveness Panel, U.S. Department of Education (1993) for evaluating the effectiveness of educational programs. Each claim centered on adult learners in adult and alternative education programs. The degree of program implementation was determined by the adoption of key elements of the CASAS system. These key elements include identifying CASAS Competencies necessary for learners to meet their goals, linking these competencies to instructional materials using the CASAS Instructional Materials Quick Search, and linking these competencies to appropriate CASAS assessment tools. Learners within education programs that adopted the key elements demonstrated:

1. Significant learning gains
2. Increased hours of participation
3. Achievement of higher goal attainment compared to programs that have not adopted the key elements

Numerous studies such as the National Evaluation of Adult Education Programs (1991) have repeatedly confirmed this claim. In addition, two California studies, an Oregon study as well as a North Carolina study, among others, confirm these three claims (For a detailed literature review, refer to the CASAS Technical Manual.)

Another important study examined the relationship of CASAS to the 2002 version of the GED. This study used data from California, Iowa, Oregon, Kansas, and Hawaii (n = 4801). A clear monotonic increasing relationship was found between CASAS reading scores and GED reading scores and CASAS math scores and GED math scores. Moreover, a similar relationship was found between CASAS reading and overall GED results averaged across the five test content areas. (See the *CASAS Technical Manual*, pages 63–65.)

There have been a number of recent studies conducted across the United States to reaffirm that the content and competencies addressed in the initial development of the item banks are still valid and relevant to the current needs of learners, instructors, administrators, employers, and social service agencies:

- The Iowa Basic Skills Survey (IABSS), 1995
- Validation of Foundation Skills (Indiana Department of Education), 1996
- Targeting Education: The Connecticut Basic Skills Survey, 1997
- CABSS Report: California Adult Basic Skills Survey, 1999

Readers should refer to the *CASAS Technical Manual*, pages 24–26 and Appendix C, pages 213–225 for more detailed information about these validation studies.

For the past two years CASAS has undertaken the development of a content standards framework on behalf of CASAS National Consortium states. The project uses the expertise of adult education professionals across the country to determine the essential content standards in reading and math for ABE and ASE and in reading and listening for ESL. The project identifies the basic skills content standards at each NRS level embedded in CASAS Competencies and links them to appropriate CASAS assessments.

B. Purposes and Uses of Assessment

CASAS Assessments

Subsequent sections of this document provide a more detailed discussion of the purposes, descriptions, policies, and test administration procedures of CASAS standardized assessments. In general, CASAS assessments are used to ensure accuracy in learner placement (appraisal tests), in diagnosis of learner strengths and weaknesses, to inform instruction (pretests), and in monitoring progress (post-tests). These tests are administered in a standardized fashion, and assessment results provide the basis for state and federal accountability reporting.

Use of Informal Assessments

The ISDE/ Office of ABE encourage local adult education agencies to use a variety of informal assessments to assist in informing instruction. The use of teacher-made tests, unit tests, portfolios, applied performance assessments, and learner observations should be encouraged to monitor learning and to inform instruction on a regular, ongoing basis.

C. Summary and Overview

Appraisal Tests: Initial Orientation and Placement into Program and Instructional Level

Initial placement with an appraisal gauges a learner's reading, math, listening comprehension, writing, and speaking skills. The test results guide placement into the appropriate program or instructional level, and also identify the appropriate progress pretest level. Idaho requires the use of an appraisal prior to placement since appraisals ensure that appropriate decisions are made regarding:

1. Educational placement
2. Pretest form to administer
3. Selection of short- and long-term instructional goals

Learners who are placed in an instructional level that is not at their ability level may be frustrated or bored and leave the program. Learners who take an inappropriate level pretest may "top out" or score below the accurate range of the test level, and agencies will not have accurate baseline pretest information to inform instruction and monitor progress. Learners who have low skill levels and identify secondary diploma or GED as a goal will not achieve their goal within a reasonable timeframe and may become discouraged. Establishing short-term goals in addition to long-term goals enables the learner to document success leading to the long-term goal. Federal reporting is based on learning gains and achievement of learner goals within a program year, although some longer-term learner goals are not reported until the learner exits the program.

The ISDE/ Office of ABE requires that local adult education/ English as a Second Language programs who are using CASAS use one of the following appraisals in the skill areas indicated in Table 2A and Table 2B:

Table 2A CASAS Appraisal Tests for ESL

<i>Skills Areas</i>	<i>ESL Appraisal Form 20</i>
Reading	✓
Listening	✓
Writing	✓
Speaking	✓

Appraisals may not be used as a pretest or to measure learner progress. Each CASAS test administration manual includes specific recommendations about which level of pretest to administer, based on the appraisal test score. CASAS provides appraisals for reading, math, listening comprehension, writing, and speaking. Agencies should administer CASAS appraisal tests prior to learner placement and prior to administering the appropriate pretest.

Progress Testing: Pretest and Post-Test

CASAS standardized progress tests are designed to assess learning along a continuum from beginning literacy and English language acquisition through completion of secondary level skills. There are several test series that monitor learning progress, with test difficulty levels ranging from below Level A through Level D. Each test level has alternate test forms parallel in content and difficulty. The test series differ primarily in contextual focus (for example, employability versus general life skills and work skills).

The ISDE/ Office of ABE require agencies to select the test series based on a learner's goals and the instructional focus of the program. Pretests should be administered as soon as feasible after enrollment into the program: either during the intake process after an appraisal is given, or after the learner is placed into the appropriate instructional level. Suggested Next Test Charts provided by CASAS should be consulted to guide pre- and post-test selection. Post-testing will be at either the same level or a higher level, depending on the pretest score. An alternate test form within the same test series is required for post testing. Additionally, the post-test must be in the same skills area as the pretest, that is, programs cannot use a reading pretest and a math post-test to determine learner gains.

Post-testing policies and procedures are covered at greater length in a later section of this document.

Tables 4A and 4B show the relationship between CASAS levels, CASAS test levels, scale score ranges, and NRS levels for ESL and ABE and ASE learners.

Scoring and Alignment with NRS Levels

Table 4B CASAS Relationship to NRS Levels for ESL

	NRS Level	CASAS Level	Reading and Listening Scale Score Ranges	Functional Writing Scale Score Ranges
1	Beginning ESL Literacy	A	180 and below	136*
2	Beginning ESL	A	181-200	146 – 200
3	Low Intermediate ESL	B	201-210	201 – 225
4	High Intermediate ESL	B	211-220	226 – 242
5	Low Advanced ESL	C	221-235	243 – 260
6	High Advanced ESL	D	236-245	261 – 270

* Estimated score below the accurate range

D. Resources for Information and Assistance

Individuals requiring information or assistance related to assessment policy or procedures in Idaho should contact Danielle Collins at Eastern Idaho Technical College (ABE), Carol Mundt at Idaho State University (ABE), or the state director, Cheryl Engel at the State Department of Education (csengel@sde.idaho.gov)

2. General Assessment Requirements

Uniform Test Administration Times

The majority of CASAS assessments have appraisal tests that learners should take prior to taking a pretest. Appraisal tests indicate the appropriate level for instruction, as well as which pretest form agencies should administer. Learners should take a pretest as soon as possible upon entry into the program and before the occurrence of any substantial instructional intervention. Learners should be assessed in the areas that are the focus of instruction, using the appropriate CASAS standardized test in reading, math, writing, speaking, or listening comprehension. Agencies should administer post-tests, using an alternate form, at the end of a semester, term, quarter, or other substantial block of instruction to document learning gains. CASAS recommends assessing after approximately 70-100 hours of instruction, however:

- Programs offering **high** intensity courses (for example, a class meets more than 15 hours per week) may choose to test at the end of a semester, term, quarter, or other substantial block of instruction, even though the instructional intervention is more than 100 hours of instruction.
- Programs offering **low** intensity courses with fewer than 70 hours in a semester, quarter, term, or other substantial block of instruction, may choose to administer a post-test at the end of the instructional period.

Programs may assess individual learners who indicate they are leaving the program before the scheduled post-test time to maximize collection of paired test data. However, testing should not occur before at least 35-40 hours of instruction.

Factors that affect learning gains include intensity and duration of instruction, motivation of learners, competence of instruction, the link between learner goals and instruction, and other instructional factors.

Post-test scores obtained at the end of a semester or other reporting period may serve as a pretest for the next semester or reporting period, provided that the interim does not exceed three to six months. Similarly, the most recent assessment results for “stop outs” returning to adult education classes may be used, provided that the last test administered does not exceed the same –three to six month window. This policy is designed to reduce or eliminate unnecessary testing.

Program personnel may wish to retest “stop outs” or students returning the following semester or reporting period if they have reason to believe that during the learner’s absence or over the summer recess a significant learning intervention occurred that may invalidate the learner’s previous assessment results. In such circumstances, retesting is always an option

Required Pre-/Post-Match Percentages

Idaho Adult Basic Education requires that local adult education providers have a pre-post- match of no less than 50% percent.

Testing for Certification

Agencies that use the Citizenship Interview Test for certification should follow the guidelines in the *CASAS Citizenship Interview Test Manual*. If retesting is necessary, a significant amount of intervening instructional hours must occur before the retesting.

A. Training for Administering Assessments

Training is essential to a quality CASAS implementation. CASAS assessments cannot be used by agencies that have not completed CASAS training by certified personnel. For a detailed discussion of CASAS trainings and training requirements and procedures, refer to Section 3, Guidelines for Each Assessment.

For local training purposes, instructors may examine CASAS tests for review purposes only. It is essential that this occurs in a controlled, supervised environment with test security safeguards in place. Agencies should take special care to ensure the collections of all test booklets at the completion of training.

B. Students with Disabilities: Use of Appropriate CASAS Test Forms

CASAS test forms that are appropriate for learners with a disability include computer-based tests and large-print tests, such as the Employability Competency System (ECS) and Life and Work reading pre- and post-tests, and tests with enhanced print such as the Life Skills Beginning Literacy Reading Assessment and Reading for Citizenship test forms. CASAS Functional Auditory and Braille tests to measure basic literacy skills for learners who are blind or have a visual impairment are in development.

The paper *Guidelines for Providing Accommodations Using CASAS Assessment for Learners with Disabilities* provides more detailed information on providing accommodations. This document is available at <www.casas.org>.

3. *Guidelines for Each Assessment*

A. Test Administration Manuals

The ISDE/ Office of ABE requires that local adult education programs follow the test administration guidelines in each test administration manual (TAM) published by CASAS for each test series used. All local adult education agencies must maintain copies of TAMs onsite for all assessments used. Test administration manuals provide quality control guidelines to ensure proper test use, administration, scoring, and interpretation of results. These manuals typically contain information about the following:

- The CASAS Assessment System
- Overview of CASAS Progress Testing
- Description of Tests
- Determining Pre- and Post-Test Level
- Test Security (See Section 3.F below)
- Instructions for Administering Tests
- Scoring
- Data Collection
- Interpretation of Results
- Curriculum Planning, Instruction, and Assessment
- Resources
- Testing Accommodations
- Skill Level Descriptors
- Suggested Next Test Charts
- Answer Keys and Score Conversion Charts (for converting raw scores to scale scores)
- Learner Profile Sheets
- Learner Performance by Competency
- Class Profile by Competency

B. Information Included for Each Assessment

Table 3 in Section 1 — CASAS Series Approved for Use by WIA Funded Programs — provides information about which assessments are appropriate for which learner populations. Tables 5A through 5G — CASAS Test Forms by Skill Areas, Levels, and Series — are presented below. At each level multiple forms are listed; these are alternate forms for post-testing. In some instances an “X” follows a test form number (e.g., 32X). These tests are extended range tests and may be used as an additional post-test within that specified level (for example, 32 and 32X are alternative forms for 31, all at level A). This table also lists the appropriate appraisal test(s) to accompany different CASAS test series.

Tables 5A -5G: CASAS Test Forms by Skill Areas, Levels, and Series

Table 5A Reading (R) (ABE/ABE/ESL)

<i>Level</i>	Life Skills Series	Life & Work Series	ECS Series	WLS Series	Citizenship Series
Beg. Literacy	27 28	27 28	27 28		27 28
A	31 32	81 82	11 12		951 952
AX	32 X	81 X 82 X			951 X 952 X
B	33 34	83 84	13 14 114	213 214	
BX	34 X				
C	35 36	85, 86* 185 186	15 16 116	215 216	Secondary Assessment Series
D	37 38	187 188	17 18	217 (id) 218 (id)	513 514
Appraisal	20 or 30	20, 30, 120 or 130	120 or 130	220 or 230	

*workplace focused
id = in development

Table 5C Listening (L) (ESL)

<i>Level</i>	Life Skills Series	Life and Work Series	ECS and WLS Series
A	51 52	(id)	51 52
B	53 54	(id)	63 64
C	55 56	(id)	65 66
Appraisal	20	(id)	20

id = in development

Table 5E Speaking (S) (ESL)

Level	Form #	Series	Content
A – D	973 974	Citizenship	Simulates USCIS oral citizenship interview
A – D	820 821	WLS	Assesses speaking ability in workplace contexts, including workplace safety and customer service

Table 5F Government and History for Citizenship (C) (ESL)

<i>Level</i>	<i>Form #</i>	<i>Series</i>	<i>Content</i>
B – C	963 964	Citizenship	Multiple-choice questions Tests knowledge of U.S. government and history

C. Training Requirements for Administering CASAS Assessments

Training in CASAS assessment is required to ensure accurate use of tests, appropriate interpretation of learner results, and to maintain the integrity and quality of the assessment process. CASAS requires that minimally one person from each agency using the CASAS system successfully complete CASAS Implementation training. Once trained, this individual can train others within his or her respective agency but may not train outside that agency.

Separate CASAS Implementation trainings have been developed for ABE/ASE, ESL, and Employability Skills. These trainings focus on teaching participants to administer, score, and interpret CASAS reading, listening, and math assessments. Implementation trainings also address how to use the CASAS competency system as well as how to use CASAS resources, such as Quick Search, to facilitate instruction.

Separate trainings are available for CASAS Functional Writing, POWER (for developmentally disabled adults), Citizenship, and Workplace Speaking, among others. The Idaho SDE/ Office of ABE requires all local agencies to comply with the CASAS training policy presented above. We have two qualified state trainers in Idaho who can provide training in your region. Please contact the personnel listed above or call the SDE/ Office of ABE at 208-332-6933 for further information regarding training.

D. Post-Testing

Post-testing requirements are presented in the section Uniform Test Administration Times.

E. Guidelines for Raw Score Conversion to Scale Scores and Using Scale Scores to Place Learners into NRS Levels

Each CASAS test Administration Manual (TAM) provides charts and guidelines for converting raw scores to scale scores. Idaho SDE/ Office of ABE requires adult education agencies to use these as reference points. The CASAS scale has been subdivided into ranges that correspond to the NRS levels. NRS guidelines prescribe that learners whose pretests place them in different instructional categories (for example, reading and math) be placed in the area with the lower score, if the learner is to receive instruction in the skill related to the lower instructional level. Placement at the lower instructional level should be the basis of determining which pretest to administer.

F. Test Security Agreements

ISDE/ Office of ABE require that all programs it funds sign an annual test security agreement. This agreement includes the following stipulations:

- The local adult education program director assumes responsibility for safeguarding all CASAS-developed assessment materials, including test administration manuals, and answer sheets (which contain marks or responses).
- All CASAS materials should be stored in a locked, preferably fireproof, file cabinet accessible to the program director or the director's designee(s).
- A staff who administers assessments should return all materials immediately after use to the program director or the director's designees.
- All answer sheets and writing samples are treated as confidential until destroyed.
- No duplication of any test form or any portion of any test form is permitted for any reason.
- Inventory information concerning CASAS materials will be supplied to Idaho's office of Adult Basic Education when requested.
- Defaced materials may not be destroyed unless authorized by ISDE/ Office of Adult Education.
- Agencies may not use displays, questions, or answers that appear on any CASAS test to create materials designed to teach or prepare learners to answer CASAS test items. Instead, programs should use instructional resources provided by CASAS, Quick Search and other support materials, to link curriculum, assessment and instruction.

G. Quality Control Procedures

Entry of Assessment Data: ISDE/ Office of Adult Basic Education require that assessment data be entered into the Idaho Management and Accountability System (IMAS).

Quality Control Procedures: ISDE/ Office of Adult Basic Education have the following quality control procedures in place to ensure that appropriate assessment procedures have been followed:

- Data Integrity Checks
- Prevention of inappropriate assessments being entered
- Prevention of incorrect scale score gains
- Data verification procedures.

Purchasing Procedures for Each Assessment: The ISDE/ Office of Adult Basic Education require programs to order CASAS assessments authorized for use in their region directly from CASAS.

BEST AND BEST Plus Assessment Policy

The *Basic English Skills Test* (BEST) and/or BEST Plus is used in some programs. These assessments may be used upon state approval.

- This policy describes the conditions under which ABE-funded programs are to use the *Basic English Skills Test* to measure the pre/post progress of adult learners enrolled in Adult Basic and Literacy Education programs.

Section A: Overview of the BEST

The Basic English Skills Test (BEST), the original BEST long form and BEST Plus, are performance-based tests. The original BEST long form has two sections, an Oral Interview and Literacy Skills and two forms, B and C. The BEST Plus has either a print-based version with a locator or a computer-adaptive version. The Oral Interview of the BEST and BEST Plus measures communication and listening comprehension. The original BEST also measures fluency and pronunciation, while the BEST Plus measures language complexity. The original BEST long form includes a Literacy Skills section that measures reading and writing abilities. This test is being updated and is scheduled for launch October 1, 2006.

Section B: Use of the BEST and BEST Plus Instruments

BEST and BEST Plus: ESL programs are to use the original BEST long form and/or BEST Plus to measure the progress of learners enrolled in ABE English as a Second Language instruction.

Best long form administration:

- Form B is to be administered as the pre-test;
- Form C is to be administered as the post-test; and
- The literacy test should be administered to students who score at least 5 points on the reading/writing section.

BEST Plus administration:

- For the computer version, use as both pre- and post-test
- For the print-based version, Form A is to be administered as the pre-test and Form B is to be administered as the post-test

Section C: Administration Procedures

Use of Timed Administration:

BEST Plus - Individually administered. Examiner should allow at least 20 minutes for each Oral Interview. Testing can take longer depending on the student's responses.

BEST long form - Individually administered. Examiner should allow approximately 15 minutes for each Oral Interview. Testing can take longer depending on the student's responses.

The BEST long form Literacy Skills section requires one hour and may be administered individually or in a group setting.

The Schedule for Administration of the Oral Pre/Post Test:

The Oral assessment should be administered at the time of a learner's enrollment, or if that is not possible, within one week. When using the BEST long form, use Form B for pre-testing.

If students scores below five on the Reading/Writing section of the BEST long form, they should not be given the Literacy test.

On the BEST long form, if after question 14, a student has answered 3 or fewer questions correctly, the test may be stopped.

If using the BEST long form, use Form C for post-testing.

The computer-based BEST Plus is adaptive according to student responses and can be used for both pre- and post-testing.

The print-based version of the BEST Plus is available in three equivalent forms; Form A should be used for pre-testing and Form B should be used for post-testing. Form C can be used for additional post-testing. The locator should be used to determine which level of the test the student should take.

On July 1, 2006, the revised ESL Educational Functioning Level descriptors for the NRS will be in effect. The ESL Educational Functioning Levels have been revised to eliminate the High Advanced Level and split the Beginning Level into two levels (Low Beginning and High Beginning).

The following tables report the correlation of BEST and BEST Plus scores to the revised NRS levels. The correlation includes Oral score ranges, Literacy score ranges, and BEST Plus score ranges as they correlate to the revised NRS levels.

Table 6 Correlation of BEST and BEST Plus Scale Scores to NRS Levels

TABLE 1: Correlating the Revised NRS Levels, SPLs and BEST Plus Scores		
NRS Educational Functioning Level	Student Performance Level (SPLs)	BEST Plus Score Range
Beginning ESL Literacy	0 - 1	400 and below
Low Beginning ESL	2	401 - 417
High Beginning ESL	3	418 - 438
Low Intermediate ESL	4	439 - 472
High Intermediate ESL	5	473 - 506
Advanced ESL	6	507 -540

Exit Criteria	7	541 and above
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TABLE 2: Correlating the Revised NRS Levels, SPLs and BEST Oral Interview Scores		
NRS Educational Functioning Level Levels (SPLs)	Student Performance Level (SPLs)	Oral Interview Score Range
Beginning ESL Literacy	0 - 1	0 - 15
Low Beginning ESL	2	16 - 28
High Beginning ESL	3	29 - 41
Low Intermediate ESL	4	42 - 50
High Intermediate ESL	5	51 - 57
Advanced ESL	6	58 – 64
Exit Criteria	7	65 and above

TABLE 3: Correlating the Revised NRS Levels, SPLs and BEST Literacy Scores		
NRS Educational Functioning Level Levels (SPLs)	Student Performance Level (SPLs)	<i>BEST Literacy</i> Score Range
Beginning ESL Literacy	0 - 1	0 - 7
Low Beginning ESL	2	8 - 35
High Beginning ESL	3	36 - 46
Low Intermediate ESL	4	47 - 53
High Intermediate ESL	5 and 6	54 - 65
Advanced ESL	7	66 and above

Section D: Test Administration Requirements

Only Adult Basic Education staff who have been trained to administer the BEST and/or BEST Plus Oral and BEST Plus Literacy Skills tests are allowed to administer these tests. The guidelines are noted below.

- Follow administration and scoring instructions listed in the test administrator's manuals for the BEST and BEST Plus.

As found in respective test manual instructions, it is imperative that the above regulations be followed for TABE, CASAS, BEST and BEST Plus testing. Likewise, it is necessary to follow instructions for entering test scores into the IMAS database and for adhering to special accommodation policies.

Section E: Post-Testing

BEST and BEST Plus recommend assessing after 80-100 hours of instruction, a minimum of 60 hours of instruction using BEST Plus, and a minimum of 60 hours of instruction using BEST Literacy, however:

- Programs offering high intensity courses (for example, a class meets more than 15-20 hours per week) may choose to test at the end of a semester, term, quarter, or other substantial block of instruction.
- Programs offering low intensity courses with fewer than 100 hours in a substantial block of instruction may choose to administer a post-test at the end of an instructional period.

Programs may assess individual learners who indicate they are leaving the program before the scheduled post-test time to maximize collection of paired test data. However, testing should not occur before at least 35-40 hours of instruction.

Retesting: In some instances students may be retested more than once to determine progress gains as they work toward meeting goals. CTB/McGraw-Hill recommends that 60 hours of instructional time pass prior to post-testing using the same level (A,D,M,E) and different form (9/10). The TABE user guide recommends that the same form (9/10) and level of the TABE not be administered within a six-month period or 120 contact hours. If retesting is given within a six-month period, it is imperative that alternate forms of the test be used.